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ROBERT HILBURN

Cartoon Rock From Ramones

Continued from First Page

club dates here was that it all seemed like a one-shot joke.

For half its sets, the Ramones were a delight. But then things became too predictable. Without the occasional surprises to keep one's expectation level high, the shows tended to lose their punch. The question facing the Ramones was where the band could take their music.

Three years later, the group has shown it has kept the sound going even if it hasn't changed it in any significant way. The Ramones now have four albums, movie exposure and the gratitude of hundreds of punk/new wave groups that have followed it.

If the United States was slow to pick up on the Ramones' approach, the group had a profound impact in England, where it contributed greatly to the rise of the punk movement. The difference is the British bands like the Sex Pistols and Clash built upon the high energy style. They moved from the Ramones' cartoon rock to angry, challenging social expositions.

Given the band's historic role and its continued light manner, it was no wonder the Ramones received a standing, hero's welcome from the capacity Royce Hall audience.

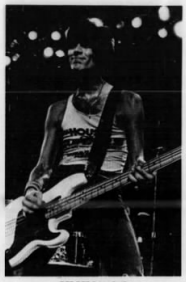
As soon as the lights dimmed after 20/20's opening set, the audience began chanting one of the group's slogans "*Hey, ho! Let's go.*"

Against the backdrop of the Ramones' customized presidential seal, the band unleashed its high-throttled assault and the audience responded by dancing or pogoing joyously. The beat was so infectious that some headed for the aisles for more room, but the ushers kept ordering them back to their seats.

The audience was so intent on having a good time that it seemed to put more into the show than did the Ramones. Guitarist Johnny Ramone and bassist Dee Dee Ramone certainly played vigorously and moved a lot, but the set was a touch perfunctory. The momentum sagged noticeably during a nondescript rendition of the old "Needles and Pins" and singer Joey Ramone seemed especially uninspired at times.

The fact is the Ramones' songs may offer the same energy, but they don't all generate the same appeal. By the two-thirds point in the set, it was clear that the group is still troubled by its original one-dimension approach. When the band returned for its three encores, you knew that you'd simply get more of the high-speed barrage.

Still, it was hard for anyone attracted to the group's invigorating style not to have had a good time Sunday. The Ramones is the kind of group that defies traditional rock



DEE DEE RAMONE
. . . high-throttled assault.
Times photo by Martha Hartzell

criticism. It may break a lot of rules, but it remains a valuable attraction. It reminds us that personality and ideas—even if that idea is rooted in *stupidness* (to cite the phrase of rock critic-philosopher R. Meltzer)—are irreplaceable elements.

Even if the critic in you walks away from a Ramones concert questioning if the band will ever be able to build upon its original base, the rock fan in you knows that you'll probably still be dancing or pogoing to its sound another three years from now: "*Hey, ho! Let's go.*"

Rolling Stones May Tour China

The Rolling Stones are investigating the possibility of performing in China next spring. A spokesman for the band said Monday that the rock group has been exploring the visit with Chinese officials in Washington, D.C., for months, but that the talks remain in a "preliminary stage." The shows would presumably be part of a tour in connection with the release of its next album early next year.

Los Angeles Times Tues., Oct. 30, 1979—Part V 7

RODERICK MANN

Brian Garfield's Man in a Mask

Brian Garfield, the best-selling author of "Death Wish," has spent the past few days in London being interviewed on television with a man who would not allow his face to be seen.

The man goes by the fictitious name of Peter Hamilton —and he is the lead character in an extraordinary new book that Garfield is publishing early next year and which will be made into a movie by his own company.

The book is called "The Paladin."

"It's certainly the oddest book I've ever written," Garfield said, when I lunched with him. "And the most extraordinary thing about it is it's all true.

The book—written as a novel to avoid legal complications—tells how Winston Churchill recruited Hamilton, then a 15-year-old schoolboy, as a spy and an assassin.

According to Garfield's story, the boy, who had grown up on Churchill's estate in the English countryside, was responsible for, among other things, the sinking of an Allied submarine, to cover evidence, and the killing of France's Adm. Darlan in North Africa.

Memoirs Were Dynamite

"The story came to me in a roundabout way," said Garfield. "A firm of solicitors representing Hamilton got in touch with an agent (Ed Victor, the man who recently negotiated the $1 million film sale of "The Four Hundred") and told him they had these memoirs in their safe. They were, he was told, dynamite. And when Victor read them, he was monumentally impressed. Hamilton's credentials were checked, and he seemed to be authentic. He had letters from Churchill, the king, lots of important men.

"I came into the picture when it was decided that there would be so many problems with Britain's Official Secrets Act and potential libel suits—after all, this man had actually killed people—that the book could only be written as a novel.

"So I sat down and had many sessions with Hamilton. I know his real name, by the way, but I've given my word not to reveal it. I may tell you that some of the things he told me were so extraordinary I frankly didn't believe them. But if it is a hoax, then it's the most elaborate one I've ever come across; it makes Clifford Irving's Howard Hughes story look like nothing."

Why, if he was Churchill's man, had he instigated the sinking of an Allied submarine? That made no sense.

"Agreed," said Garfield. "But in this case it was a Dutch submarine that had sighted the Japanese fleet en route for Hawaii at the beginning of December, 1941. They sent out a coded message to the British Admiralty. That signal was seen by only a limited number of people, all of whom were later killed. Why were they killed? Why was the submarine sunk? To make sure Washington never knew the attack was coming. Remember, the British badly wanted America into the war."

Incredible.

"Isn't it?" said Garfield.

★

OFF THE HOOK. Jessica Lange, the sloe-eyed beauty who made her acting debut in Dino De Laurentiis' film "King Kong" and then seemed to vanish from sight, is alive and well and living in New York. And she now has two movies under her attractive belt—Bob Fosse's "All That Jazz" and Bob Kaufman's "How to Beat the High Cost of Living."

"All That Jazz," due out in December, is the incredible Fosse's thinly disguised life story (except that in the movie he winds up dead in a rubber bag). In the film, which stars Roy Scheider, Jessica plays the Angel of Death.

"Nobody's supposed to know that," she said, when we talked the other day. "But yes, that's the role I play. I wear white all the time, and appear as a sort of fantasy character. Only as he gets closer to death at the end do I become more real."

She is, not surprisingly, delighted to be back working after her two-year layoff following "King Kong."

Returned to New York

"That was forced on me," she said. "Remember, I was under exclusive contract to Dino De Laurentiis after we made 'King Kong.' I got lots of offers, but Dino had total control over what films I could and couldn't take. It got to the point where I honestly thought of not continuing with an acting career. I wasn't comfortable living in Los Angeles, so I came back to New York and studied and did a play in North Carolina and just hung about.

"Then I got a call from Bob Fosse asking if I'd like to do 'All That Jazz' and I jumped at the chance. He's a very old friend. Since I didn't clear it with Dino it was obviously breach of contract, but now everything's all right and my contract with him is ended."

With the dreaded prospect of "Son of Kong" removed, and a couple of new movies, she is understandably buzzard. And her friendship with ballet star Mikhail Baryshnikov, whom she met on the set of "The Turning Point," continues to flourish.

"In fact, everything's great," she said. "And in . . . "The High Cost of Living' I finally get to play a normal woman. In my first film I was an ape's plaything and in my second, a figment of a dying man's imagination. At last I'm a real woman, and loving it.

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